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ABSTRACT

The findings of the independent evaluation of Operation COPE are reported, with reference to the project sponsors' contractual commitments, in a series of categorical statements congruent with the evaluators' conclusion that the demonstration ABE project for young mothers in Washington, D.C., represented a "spectrum of success hues." The innovative features of Operation COPE which may be projected as having national significance and/or being of special value to the adult education effort identified in the evaluation include: (1) the involvement of a national organization, National Council of Negro Women (NCNW), which gives promise of the delivery of needed ABE and coping services to the racial and cultural minorities interested in acquiring these skills, to whom NCNW already has access; (2) the approaches to staff and volunteer development; (3) the integration of coping skills and ABE in a way which meets the interest of participants in employability, without violating ABE values; and (4) the significant linkage with community resources. The evaluators conclude that the umbrella purpose of Operation COPE, which was to develop a model of a family learning center as a component of a multipurpose arrangement offering a vehicle for education and information related to family needs, was achieved. (Author/AJ)

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ADDENDUM TO REPORT

Operation COPE

A FAMILY LEARNING CENTER

A SPECIAL EXPERIMENTAL DEMONSTRATION PROJECT FUNDED BY THE
OFFICE OF EDUCATION (ADULT EDUCATION)
UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION, AND WELFARE

Grant No. OEG-0-73-5226

INDEPENDENT EVALUATOR'S REPORT
FOR THE PERIOD JULY 1, 1974 – JUNE 30, 1975

by Rhetta M. Arter, Ph.D.

U S DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH,
EDUCATION & WELFARE
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF
EDUCATION

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NATIONAL COUNCIL OF NEGRO WOMEN, INC.
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CE006015

PERSPECTIVE

OPERATION COPE has been funded through Title III of the Adult Education Act, which carries provisions as follows:

"OBJECTIVES: To strengthen the ongoing State grant adult basic education program through experimentation with new teaching methods, programs, techniques, and with new operational and administrative systems.

. . .

"USES AND RESTRICTIONS: Projects must involve the use of innovations of national significance or special value to the adult education program and must involve cooperative arrangements with other programs in a way that has unusual promise in promoting a comprehensive or coordinated approach to the problems of persons with basic educational deficiencies..."*

Section 509 (b) of the above legislation is designated to be directed toward the purpose to

"Develop a model of a Family Learning Center as a component of a Multi-Purpose Community Service Center. Many communities now have comprehensive service centers in which several human service agencies cooperate to provide a variety of services. Models are needed which demonstrate the adaptation of the Adult Learning Center concept to this setting, developing a family-oriented center which operates in conjunction with other services as a component of the comprehensive service center. In this community multi-purpose arrangement, the Family Learning Center offers a vehicle for education and information related to family needs. It would utilize and adapt for adult education uses information and materials from other services: it would seek to increase the competence of the participants in making use of needed services as well as participating in the planning and operation of the Center. It would give priority to education, health and nutrition, consumer problems, living skills and other family shared needs "**

This Evaluation has been addressed to two discretely defined sets of accomplishment criteria, viz., those which derive from the legislative background of the project's funding and the Office of Education's

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*1974 CATALOG OF FEDERAL DOMESTIC ASSISTANCE, Executive Office of the President, Office of Management and Budget, Washington, D.C., pages 206-207.

**Office of Education, OPEN LETTER (undated) page 5.

interpretations of this in instructions for the submission of proposals; and those which are specified in the approved proposal which have been regarded by the sponsoring organization and the Evaluators as contractual commitments. Note that the latter are construed to be inclusive of the NCNW commitments within the "Operation COPE--Plan of Work" prepared by the Project Director and submitted to the Office of Education as of 10/24/74. The discussion of progress toward the achievement of goals as identified by the Evaluators, therefore, is treated in accordance with the above sets of accomplishment criteria.

1. The accomplishments of Operation COPE--set forth in the Project Report--with special reference to the work with the "solo parents," i.e., the integration of ABE and coping skills and the attendant activities--volunteer services, development of a "model" Advisory Committee, of human resources development and the in-service training of professionals, paraprofessionals and volunteers within this program are seen by the Evaluators as "potentially effective in efforts to strengthen the ongoing State grant Adult Education program." This conclusion is based on assumptions that

> those carrying responsiblity for strengthening the cited grant adult education program will have access to the findings of the COPE operations; that they will adapt and utilize them otherwise in appropriate ways for the desired strengthening; and that the analyses and adaptations will take into consideration the dynamics of identified weaknesses as well as strengths for use in this strengthening process. It seems important to note, in this regard, that some of the dissemination procedures already used and those

projected by NCNW for post-project activities will be potentially useful for this purpose. Special reference is made in this context to the Handbook which is in preparation as this report is in progress. It may be noted also that the Project Personnel who prepared the Final Report have taken pains to include statements of principles and philosophies of work which are essential to successful ABE undertakings, particularly those which they have found to be significant to their efforts to integrate ABE and coping skills. The identifications of these seem to afford ready availability to those interested in applications in other situations.

2. The innovative features of Operation COPE which may be projected as of national significance and/or special value to the Adult Education program identified within this evaluation include--

-- the involvement of the unique resources of a national organization of Black women in an undertaking of this nature, with special reference to its capability to replicate and otherwise utilize the findings of the COPE experience in communities and settings across the country, and indeed in other countries, especially those comprising large numbers of Black women and members of other racial and cultural minorities which are in developing status. This involvement gives promise of the delivery of needed ABE and coping services--integrated in ways which build on this COPE experience--to the racial and cultural minorities which may be interested in acquiring such skills and to whom NCNW has ready access;

-- the approaches to staff and volunteer development which are described in the narrative report, which are built on sound principles of ABE and skills service delivery, and which are responsive to the needs and interests of the prime participants;

-- the demonstration of the ways in which this integrative approach--of coping skills and ABE--has been used to meet the high interest of many of the participants in their own employability, without violating or conflicting with ABE values. Here it may be noted that this has been identified by the Evaluators as a point of concern and potential conflict in some other ABE efforts;

-- the ways in which Operation COPE was moving, especially in its closing months, toward significant linkages with community resources. The Evaluators' analysis of this movement reflects a heightened momentum in this direction. It is regrettable that the project's timing was such as to interrupt this movement before it reached its full potential. This, of course, is related to some of the problems encountered in the first year of operation, as well as time and other pressures within Phase II. A projection of the pace and comprehension potential of this progress raises expectations of high success in this area had a third year of work--Phase III--become possible. Observations, interviews and documentary analyses combine to support the conclusion that this progress toward the desired level and extent of such linkage was a function of the credibility which Operation COPE was able to establish in Phase II.

Within the context of the foregoing, it is discernible that the ultimate focus--the umbrella purpose--of Operation COPE has been

"To develop a model(s) of a family learning center as a component of a multipurpose arrangement which would offer a vehicle for education and information related to family needs."

OPERATION COPE--FAMILY LEARNING CENTER: PHASE II

The takeoff point--the ground for departure--for an evaluation is the contractual commitment between the sponsoring organization and the funding agency. This includes any documents--in addition to the approved proposal--which represent agreements/acceptances regarding the processes and procedures which are to be used to implement such commitments. In reference to OPERATION COPE: A FAMILY LEARNING CENTER--hereafter to be referred to as "Operation COPE"--these grounds have been established in--

-- the proposal for a continuation grant prepared by the sponsoring organization--the NATIONAL COUNCIL OF NEGRO WOMEN--and submitted to the Occupational and Adult Educational Branch of the U.S. OFFICE OF EDUCATION as of May 24, 1974. This proposal was approved and funded by OE.

-- the "Operation COPE--Plan of Work" submitted by the Project Director to the OE Education Program Specialist as of October 24,1974.

This evaluation is grounded in these two documents which provide the bases for assessment of achievement, with respect to the above-referred-to contractual commitments. These assessments, in turn, are based on documentary data made available to the Evaluators by the sponsoring organization, observations of the program in progress, and interviews with some of the prime participants and others directly involved in this project. This report of the findings of the evaluation has been constructed to avoid duplication of information presented in the Final Report of the project, in which the data are reported in considerable detail. It, therefore, makes no effort to provide a narrative account of Operation COPE: for this the reader is referred to the cited Final Report.

As indicated above, the NATIONAL COUNCIL OF NEGRO WOMEN submitted and the OFFICE OF EDUCATION approved and funded a proposal for continuity--Phase II--of Operation COPE which included specifications as follow:

"OBJECTIVES

COPE proposes to develop a model(s) of a family learning center that will service a manageable group of educationally disadvantaged, solo, female parents and to further develop a model of eliciting volunteer staff for ABE programs by:

A. Developing curricula which incorporate at least three basic coping skills with ABE.
B. Developing a method of in-service training for professionals and paraprofessionals in ABE programs.
C. Developing a model of human resource development by using NCNW as a base for initial recruitment and for training an ABE volunteer staff.
D. Developing a model of an advisory committee for ABE programs.

"OVERVIEW OF PROPOSAL

The COPE plan of action emanates from past successes in combining skills and ABE, and will endeavor to provide a comprehensive program which will address the needs of the students from an andragogical perspective. COPE will provide learning settings in which students can progress along a broad spectrum; receive counseling and support on making decisions on life problems; participate in formulating curricula; and receive supportive services from volunteers."**

Review of the above suggests the reality, viz., that this program entailed the involvement of "participants" in differing roles and functions within its operations. To facilitate clarity in later references, these participants have been characterized by the Evaluators as follows:

1. Prime participants--Minority female heads of households, identified within this program as "Solo Parents";

**OPERATION COPE: APPLICATION FOR FEDERAL ASSISTANCE FY-75, Parts I--III, submitted to the Office of Education by the National Council of Negro Women as of May 24, 1974; funded by the OE.*

2. Advisory Committee Members;

3. Volunteers;

4. Other representatives of the sponsoring organization;

5. Personnel employed for the specific purpose of carrying cut the funding commitments--Operation COPE employed staff.

An analysis of the extent to which the sponsor met its commitments in reference to the above categories offers a takeoff for the report of the evaluative findings.

1. Prime Participants--In the above-cited "Plan of Work" which, as indicated, was submitted by the Project Director to OE as of 10/24/74, it was stated that COPE would serve--

> "...Target population mothers who are heads of households, who are less than 36 years of age, whose school achievement is less than eight years in reading and arithmetic as measured by standardized tests, and whose family income is low enough to place them in the poverty category in 1974. At least 80 percent of these kinds of mothers will comprise the target population. There will be 100 women served." (underscore supplied)

During Phase II of Operation COPE, a total of 110 mothers were enrolled. Of this number, 82 were classified by COPE project staff as "active," i.e., attending four or more project classes. The remaining 28 were "inactive" because of their failure to meet this attendance requirement. However, it is to be noted that "active" and "numbers served" are not synonymous. Some of the 28 who did not fill the requirements for "active" status did receive and use COPE services. This includes those who

-- availed themselves of COPE counseling and moved on to other educational or job training programs before they had met the four session attendance requirement;

-- found employment and moved out of the program.

-- secured help with family-related problems which had brought them to Operation COPE and decided that further assistance was not necessary: or

-- were referred to other community resources for specific help with the problems which they brought to Operation COPE.

In a number of instances, these women received COPE counseling and actually moved through the linkage process which was built into the COPE commitment. On this basis, the Evaluators include them among the numbers "served." On this same basis, the conclusion is that Operation COPE met its commitment to serve "100 women."

With reference to the characteristics of the 110 COPE enrollees,* it has been found that more than 80 per cent met the criteria, viz.:

Age of Participants: Commitment--80% less than 36 years N=110

Age of Enrollees	Number	Percent of Total
18 - 24 years	32	29.0%
25 - 34 years	56	51.0%
35 years	5	4.5%
(under 36 years: subtotal)	(93)	(84.5%)
36 - 44 years	11	10.0%
45 years and over	6	5.5%
TOTAL	110	100.0%

All tables prepared and made available to Evaluators by COPE staff.

READING INSTRUCTIONAL LEVELS: Commitment--80% less than 8th grade N=110

Instructional Levels	HIGHEST GRADE COMPLETED							
	12th Grade	11th Grade	10th Grade	9th Grade	8th Grade	7th Grade	6th Grade and below	TOTAL
7th Grade	20	11	6	5	5	0	1	48
6th Grade	3	2	1	0	2	0	0	8
5th Grade	4	5	4	2	1	1	0	17
4th Grade	1	3	2	5	0	0	0	11
3rd Grade	2	0	0	1	0	1	0	4
2nd Grade	1	1	6	0	0	0	3	11
1st Grade	1	0	0	0	0	0	2	3
n.r.	2	0	0	0	2	0	0	4
SUBTOTAL	34	22	19	13	10	2	6	106
No data available								4
TOTAL								110

Note: None of the prime participants could read above the seventh grade level even though 100 women had completed the seventh grade or above in school.

MATHEMATICS INSTRUCTIONAL LEVELS: Commitment--80% less than 8th grade N=110

	HIGHEST GRADE COMPLETED							
Instructional Levels	12th Grade	11th Grade	10th Grade	9th Grade	8th Grade	7th Grade	6th Grade and below	TOTAL
7th Grade	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
6th Grade	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
5th Grade	13	8	8	1	4	1	0	35
4th Grade	11	9	5	8	4	0	1	38
3rd Grade	3	2	4	3	2	1	1	16
2nd Grade	1	2	1	1	0	0	3	8
1st Grade	1	1	0	0	0	0	1	3
n.r.	4	0	1	0	0	0	0	5
SUBTOTAL	34	22	19	13	10	2	6	106
No data available								4
TOTAL								110

Note: Performance in mathematics was at a lower level than that of reading at entry to Operation COPE. No one achieved higher than the sixth grade level even though 100 prime participants had completed the seventh school grade or higher.

MARITAL STATUS OF COPE PRIME PARTICIPANTS N=110

Marital Status	Number	Percent of Total
Single	52	47.0%
Separated	35	32.0%
Married	12	11.0%
Divorced	9	8.0%
Widowed	2	2.0%
TOTAL	110	100.0%

From the above distribution pattern, it seems predictable that more than 80 percent were reported to be heads of households.

Associated with these data, with reference to the target population for Operation COPE, are the findings that all but two of the 110 were mothers, with all but 12 qualifying for the designation of "solo parents" of a combined total of 325 children. More than 90 percent of these 325 children were under 18 years of age at the time that their parents enrolled in Operation COPE.

According to the Final Report of this Project, "over 80 percent of the participants met the target population criteria...in regard to income..." (p. 19.)
It is to be concluded, therefore, that Operation COPE met its commitment with reference to the number and characteristics of women to be classified as prime participants in Phase II of its operations.

Other participant categories are identified in the analyses of progress toward objectives which follow:

"COPE proposes to develop a model(s) of a family learning center that will service a manageable group of educationally disadvantaged, solo, female parents and to further develop a model of eliciting volunteer staff for ABE programs by..."

OBJECTIVE.... A. Developing curricula which incorporate at least three basic coping skills with ABE.

According to the project staff reports, the prime participants in Operation COPE were interested in three "coping skills": typing, sewing, and arts and crafts. It may be noted here that these skills represented continuity of those chosen in the project's Phase I. It is reported further--by prime participants, project staff and others knowledgeable about Operation COPE--that the predominate interest in the selection of these skills pertained to their potentials for economic advantage--employment. This interest in occupational skills related to two possibilities--

-- job-readiness for employment away from home in the traditional wage earner style(s);

-- self-employment at home, i.e., creating articles that could be sold. This was a special interest of mothers of young pre-school children. However, it should be noted that they did not monopolize this interest which was shared by others who discovered their arts and crafts skills.

The Project Report describes the ways in which the curriculum was developed to integrate ABE and coping skills with the expressed and developed interests of the learners. The Evaluators' conclusion that this objective of the program was achieved with the active participant group is based on observations and the interviews and written statements of prime participants. Here it may be reported that, although these

prime participants seemed most conscious of their achievements in relation to the cited economic interests, others could be identified including--

-- the utilization of the COPE experience in relation to home and family life as evidenced by the activities relating to making their respective homes more attractive, the reports of enhanced understanding of their children and how to "help them grow," and--especially as economic pressures became more stringent--active interest in consumer education.

These are qualitative findings, not amenable to statistical measurement. Similar to others who take part in educational experiences, these participants were not able to identify--certainly not to quantify--the effects of their participation in Operation COPE on themselves, their families, their homes. The case studies do provide some evidence, however, that the project had some positive effects in all of these areas on some of the prime participants. There are data pertaining to 64 of the prime participants in the Final Report which offer intimations of the above. To be found there also is a small sample of the comments written by some of the participants which provide the color and human interest which are important within an appraisal of this nature.

The Handbook, which is in progress as this report is prepared, will provide further insight into the nature of the curriculum which has been found to be effective within Operation COPE.

Important to the assessment of the success of the curriculum developed by Operation COPE are other factors which impinge upon its development

and its effectiveness. Here it becomes clear that the weight of the evidence is to be found in the operations that were carried on in Stanton Dwellings. This is because of the fact that the COPE facility in this setting was in operation throughout most of Phase II. To assure full perception of the significance of this information, it seems desirable here to quote from the Final Report.

> "Two family learning centers were to be developed, one at Stanton Dwellings in a public housing project [in Anacostia] and one at Council House, 1318 Vermont Avenue, N.W. The Redevelopment Land Agency was in the process of restoring Council House and promised occupancy of the building on May 15, 1975.* When it was clear that this was impossible, COPE rented Selden-Thomas House, 2011 13th Street, N.W., from May 15 to June 20, 1975 to conduct its program in a nearby location. Finally, classes were conducted at the Bethune Learning Center from June 23 through June 30, 1975. COPE operated in spite of the handicaps of the small size of classrooms at Stanton Dwellings and the uncertainties surrounding Council House, which made necessary the holding of programs for the training of volunteers to be held in locations furnished by the D.C. Public School Adult Education Program, and at Selden-Thomas House before Bethune was ready for occupancy. These adjustments demanded a high degree of flexibility in the program and a high degree of cooperation which ultimately benefited both programs."**

OBJECTIVE....B. [by] Developing a method of in-service training for professionals and paraprofessionals in ABE programs.

At the beginning of Phase II of Operation COPE, in-service training/staff development loomed as one of the pressing needs if the program were to move forward. It is the conclusion that this has been one of the strongest aspects of Operation COPE. Obviously this derives from the background and experience of the Project Director--an experienced

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this promised date represented one of a long series. NCNW has been without control over the completion of Council House and has been faced with the problem, in re: Operation COPE and other programs which it sponsors, of inability to meet projections which had been offered in good faith.

***Source--Final Report, page 13--erroneously numbered page 14.*

university professor who brought a rich background to this task. The staff development is described in the Final Report. The function of this evaluation is to assess its effects.

1. The products of the staff development in Phase II became apparent in the growing clarity of project staff with reference to moving toward the objectives as these pertained to work with prime participants. Not all staff members accepted the strictures and disciplines which were imposed; as a result there was some personnel turnover. Some staff who remained in the program have volunteered their assessments to the Evaluators that the in-service training has been meaningful and that it has contributed to their professional growth. This is not to be construed as unanimous: the Evaluators have received some negative comments accompanied by the feeling that "staff should be given more freedom."
2. The effectiveness of the staff development, however, reveals itself as the outcomes and experiences within Phase II of Operation COPE are compared with those of Phase I. There seems little question that the project and its personnel--professional, paraprofessional and support--functioned more coherently, efficiently and effectively in this second operational period. The development of this personnel was reflected in the nature of the reports which were shared with the Evaluators and in the ways in which they were observed to be handling their responsibilities within Operation COPE as it moved ahead.

Significant to the accomplishments that were possible in Phase II of Operation COPE with respect to staff development has been the Team Approach, described in the Final Report. Although the tendency has been to appraise this approach highly in terms of its effectiveness in the delivery of services within this project, the Evaluators have been able also to identify evidences of its positive contributions to staff development/in-service training. Notable here has been the rotating of responsibilities which has contributed to staff growth, development, and perception of roles and responsibilities within the team constellation.

Staff development within Operation COPE seems to have been most effective in relation to teaching of ABE and coping skills. With further operating time, and more stable conditions of work, it seems desirable to afford this type of in-service training for work with volunteers. The differentials with regard to staff development in this area as compared with those in ABE-coping education seem to be the functions of time, pressures, and the instability of the situation pertaining to Council House. It is recommended that replicative undertakings regard this as an area in which significant contributions may be made.

OBJECTIVE....C. [by] Developing a model of human resource development by using NCNW as a base for initial recruitment and for training an ABE volunteer staff.

According to reports of the project staff, there were 56 service volunteers involved in Operation COPE in its Phase II. The introduction of this service and the ways in which it was organized were affected by the uncertainties relating to Bethune House. It is the conclusion of

the Evaluators that the project's movement toward substitute facilities when Council House could not be secured, as per the original plan, represented one of the most significant actions taken during Phase II. The fact that this action took place after repeated disappointments regarding possible Council House occupancy dates; that it represented adjustments in the original plan and accommodation to reality seems to signal some of its strength. It is anticipated that this feature of Operation COPE will be treated in the Handbook, and that this treatment will be highly useful to units and affiliates of NCNW that may find ways of replicating this program.

In appraising the recruitment and training of the ABE volunteer staff, with special reference to possibilities for replication, the Evaluators feel called upon to point up the uniqueness of the District of Columbia as an unusual reservoir of qualified, experienced, talented and dedicated Black women. Not many cities in which this project may be replicated may be expected to afford such a resource. This means that--

-- planning may require more time than it was allowed in this project, due to the pressures of the funding realities;
-- recruitment may not yield such ready initial results as those which were possible in the District of Columbia which is also the home base of the National Council of Negro Women;
-- training an ABE volunteer staff will require considerable attention to the findings of this operation, as they are shared with the replicators, and will--of course--have to be adapted to the needs and potentials of the discrete settings.

However, it may be said at this point that this aspect of Operation COPE taps into the potential strength of the sponsoring organization and its potentials in other parts of the country. The availability of NCNW units and those of affiliated organizations and, of course, the readily accessible pool of capable women within those structures represent a "plus" that can be responsive to the identifications of need, the skill of the project's organizers in opening the doors for meaningful volunteer contribution, and the sensitivity of those at the policy and other decision-making levels in giving recognition to those who make such services available.

OBJECTIVE....D. [by] Developing a model of an advisory committee for ABE programs.

The Advisory Committee of Operation COPE as it developed became one of the strengths of the operation. Sorely missed in the first phase of this project, this Committee was comprised of persons who represented a range of interest, background, organizational resources, and community cooperation. It cannot be regarded as separate from the community linkages which characterized some of the program's most effective work. The interaction was there, and proved important to the successes which Operation COPE achieved in Phase II. Chaired by a Vice President of NCNW who brought her own professional experience to the project, this Committee moved into service as a link to the sponsoring organization and to the community. One of its major strengths was its inclusion of prime participants. A review of some of the materials shared with the Committee,as well as observation of one of its meetings and conversations with some of its members, lead to some conclusions which may be summarized here:

-- The Committee's potentials could not be plumbed in the time that was available between its origination and the close of the project.

-- In the event that replication of this project becomes possible--in D.C. or elsewhere--this Advisory Committee, or one that is constructed in its image, needs to be utilized with imagination, creativity, and deep awareness of its potentials. This means that

- careful attention will need to be given to its staffing by project personnel, with such responsibility included in the job description;
- creativity may be directed toward handling reporting procedures so as to avoid their drain of meeting time and toward utilizing meetings in such ways as to elicit and make maximum provision for the responses of Advisory Committee members and the opportunity to draw them ever more deeply into the project's undertakings;
- understanding of the functions of the Advisory Committee--the differentials between its roles and those of staff members--become an important part of staff development and in-service trai

Before returning to the Proposal Overview and any assessment of the success of Operation COPE in Phase II with respect to its commitment, it seems desirable to take into consideration that Phase II did represent continuity from a first funding period. The evaluation of that experience carried with it some identification of "Problems

and Potentials of Operation COPE" which were deemed significant to the realization of the project's purposes. These were briefed as:

1. The importance of experienced, trained staff

The Evaluators have found that within Operation COPE careful attention was given to dealing with the need for experienced, trained staff and for more attention to the deployment of staff within the project. Considerable movement and improvement have been found in this area within Phase II. This includes

-- clarification of concepts and terminology;

-- limiting and sharpening project tasks.

2. The necessity for clear identification of target groups

The work that was done in this aspect of this project during Phase II reveals itself in the analyses of the characteristics of the recruited enrollees and the care that was taken in recruitment to tap those who were eligible.

3. The importance of the assessment of participant progress

The case studies and other procedures utilized for such assessments represented significant improvements within Phase II of Operation COPE. While understanding participant resistance to traditional "before-and-after" testing and the fact that many of those who took part found what they were looking for and moved on to their next stages of development without formally or informally "graduating" from the project's operations made a neat procedure for "measuring" prime participant accomplishment near-impossible, the Evaluators suggest that some methods be developed for achievement assessment in any replication of this program. Here it is suggested that there is room for considerable ingenuity in the identification of valid

indices of achievement in relation to "coping skills." It seems desirable to provide for the identifications of these at spaced intervals in order to allow for some clearer, stronger identifications of "what works" and the ways in which "what works" contributes to the growth and development of the participants.

4. The need for calling upon the unusual volunteer resources of the sponsoring organization--the National Council of Negro Women has been discussed above. Again this is to be identified as one of the most important potentials for strengthening the operations of a project like COPE. Considerable progress towards realization of this potential has been made in Phase II. The distance is not yet covered. An expansion of the range of volunteer responsibilities is a function of time and experimentation.

5. For all personnel--professional, paraprofessional, support, and others who are to be involved in the COPE operations, the desirability and effectiveness of training/briefing conferences has begun to be demonstrated within Phase II.

6. The need for systematized reporting procedures has been given attention in Phase II of this operation. As the Evaluators work with the voluminous body of data which are available, it becomes apparent that further work is needed to make provision for more ready synthesis and integration of the many findings which are coming into view.

7. The potential for improving communications--seems to have been realized to a considerable extent. The designation of an NCNW Vice President as Chairman of the Advisory Committee, the reports to the sponsor's Executive Committee and Board of Directors as

well as to assemblies of representatives of NCNW units and affiliates--all of these buttress and interact with the day-to-day communications which have been stepped up between COPE and other NCNW-sponsored staff, and between this personnel and the non-project NCNW personnel.

8. The whole question of logistics--sites, their interactions with the pressing need for program supplies, materials and equipment has been dealt with in Phase II to the extent that the uncontrollables, especially those pertaining to sites, have permitted.

The big question relating to Operation COPE which derives from the Proposal Overview and the objectives of the proposal may be stated as follows: Has Operation COPE--in its Phase II--made significant progress toward the provision of a comprehensive program which provides learning settings in which students can progress along a broad spectrum, receive counseling and support in making decisions on life problems, participate in formulating curricula, and receive supportive services from volunteers?

Clearly, the project in its second phase makes broad strides toward the provision of the learning settings as specified here. These settings have been the products of the climate which has been established by project staff, the team approach, the staff development efforts, the cooperation of community organizations and resources, the contributions of volunteers and the Advisory Committee as well as of the direct face-to-face ABE-coping services made available to the participants.

It seems apparent also that the formal and informal counseling which has taken place within the project and the support which has been available to those who wished to avail themselves of it in making decisions on life's problems have been significant within the project's operations. No effort can be made here to put this into quantitative terms.

The involvement of the prime participants in formulating curricula and in making other determinations about the program has been manifest in the participants' own reports of their activities and in their behavior during observation periods. The opportunities to shape the schedule and to "pace" the program seem to stand out for some of the participants, especially some of those who approached the experience tentatively, fearing that it would be "another school" characterized by lockstep requirements and pre-determinations of approaches, schedules, and learning content which they would be unable to influence.

The supportive services which the COPE volunteers provided in Phase II, in the words of one participant, "helped to open our eyes" to the range of life experiences that are possible. The contact with the volunteers, the feeling of belonging to a larger group of women with shared interests and "stakes in life" seems to have had meaning for some who participated. this apparently applies to some members of both groups--participants and volunteers.

SUMMARY

The sections of this report which precede this summary afford a range of intimations and categorical statements regarding the findings of this evaluation. Taken as a whole, these may be found to be congruent with the Evaluators' conclusions about this project, i e., that Operation COPE in its Phase II represented a spectrum of success hues--ranging from the most muted to those which stand out clear and strong.

A valid assessment of the accomplishments of Phase II must take into account the important function of time. This second phase of this project inherited a number of problems and weaknesses--some of which were identified in the ex post facto analysis of Phase I. Actually, the new Project Director and those who worked with her during Phase II operated within a time frame of an approximate ten months, during which it was shown to be desirable to turn Operation COPE around with respect to some of these problems; to locate and establish new operational sites; to move through the promises--over which neither Director nor the sponsoring organization had control--to the realities pertaining to Council House and to the weaknesses which its delays brought about. There were many hours devoted to efforts to reconcile differing approaches to the perception of the project and the significance of its contractual commitments as represented in the funded proposal.

It seems important to indicate here that the Evaluators have approached Operation COPE as a laboratory in which its interacting components were to be viewed, with reference to both the cited specific comments and

the overall perspective. This approach is reflected in this summary.

The development of the models of a family learning center in "community multi-service arrangements" is at the heart of this effort. Here "COPE" has encountered some of the problems of the fields to which it relates, with reference to differing opinions as to what really constitutes a "multi-service center." The Evaluators have approached this "multi-service arrangement" as free of the single-site requirement which sometimes is ascribed to it. Actually there were other services in Stanton Dwellings which could be defined as a "multi-service" site. However, in terms of the COPE perspective and objectives, the essential component of "multi-service" has appeared to be protection of the prime participants against the fragmentation of their personal and family needs, with respect to available community resources, and to the provision of a central point at which these needs might be identified, diagnosed, and coped with through a multi-service arrangement embracing a broad range of community resources--some of them in or near the specified "center" and some in other locations within the cooperating community.

Operation COPE demonstrated some of the possibilities suggested, especially through its Community Linkages; it was able to suggest others without developing them fully, particularly as such development entailed integration of the project's total complex--Curriculum, Counseling, Climate, Community Linkages, Volunteer Services, relations with the D.C. Public School Adult Education Program--as well as relations with other NCNW programs and projects. The promise was there, discernible to the eyes of those looking for such potentials. It would have required an

additional period--one, two, three years--to have realized these and to have tested them in stable, adequate operating sites.

With reference to its "target population": in its recruitment and range of contacts with the 110 female heads of households described in the Project Final Report, Operation COPE has been found to have met its commitment. This applies to the characteristics which were assigned to that "target population" in the contractual documents. It comes clear from the data of the evaluation that the project addressed "the needs of the students from an andragogical perspective" in accordance with the proposal. The involvement of a significant number of the prime participants in shaping the program--schedule, content, direction toward economic interests, home and family problems, and community resources--as well as in participation in the Advisory Committee itself, are seen as factors important not only to compliance with commitments, but in the behavioral manifestation of a value system which placed the interests of the participants in high priority.

Of course, the accomplishments of these prime participants which they and members of the project staff have attributed to the Operation COPE experiences must be accorded positions of high importance in an appraisal of the program's services. According to the available data, in addition to the ABE and specific coping skills which were built into the design, there were other accomplishments identified as follows:

Nature of accomplishment	Number of prime participants
Became aware of employment opportunities in the community	65
Became familiar with locations and eligibility requirements of day care and pre-school facilities in neighborhoods	65
Became familiar with community agencies which provide financial assistance	65
Became aware of agencies which provide ethnic and cultural enrichment services	30
Enrolled children in day care/pre-school programs	25
Made use of recreational facilities in the community	20
Made use of free medical services for themselves and their children	15
Visited agencies which provide ethnic and cultural enrichment services	15
Secured full or part-time employment	9
Enrolled in other Adult Education programs	6
Took advantage of counseling services provided by financial assistance agencies	6
Participated in community civic groups	5
Made use of agencies which provide emergency food and clothing	2

These accomplishments relate clearly to coping competencies and to the family learning focus of the centers which Operation COPE established.

A discussion of the ways in which the contractually specified objectives were met in Phase II is to be found in other parts of this report. In summary it may be stated that--

A. the development of curricula which would incorporate at least three basic coping skills with ABE received considerable attention, benefited from the professionalism and experience which were injected into Phase II and represented one of the major strengths of the operation.

B. the development of a method of in-service training for professionals and paraprofessionals in ABE represented many strengths also. It was weakened in some instances, operationally, by differences in individual appraisals of the approaches which were used, by personnel turnover, and by the unavailability of the time required to define a style--within COPE operations--which was capable of clear differentiation from more familiar, traditional training/personnel development approaches. It is anticipated that the Handbook--now in preparation--will help to clarify these distinctions, especially as it is directed to possible replications of this program.

Stanton Dwellings provided the laboratory in which most of the Operation COPE Phase II activities pertaining to Objectives A and B took place. The significance of this site as such a laboratory, and its appropriateness for a project which is directed toward the interests and needs of "solo, female parents" and designed to utilize the resources of an organization of Black women which is deeply

concerned with the problems and potentials of all racial and cultural minorities, seems heightened by recognition of the facts that--

-- Stanton Dwellings are located in a large urban city which reports that more than 70 percent of its total population is classified by the U.S. Census Bureau as "Negro."

-- these dwellings afford a public housing setting which--not unusually--represents a high proportion of families headed by nonwhite females. Here it may be noted that, according to data made available to the Evaluators*--

Of a total of 1,039,447 families in public housing in the United States as of June 1974:

- slightly over 44 percent--459,150--were families headed by women of all minorities.
- approximately 37 percent--385,200--were families headed by Black women.

These data become more striking on further analysis which reveals that:

- 80 percent of the 484,374 Black families living in public housing were headed by females.

*Source: *U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, Office of Housing Management, Information Systems Division, Washington, D.C. Special compilation (unpublished) in response to request. This Division derived the data by application of percentages of female heads of households in the Reexamination Reports as of September 1974 to total family occupancy as of June 1974.*

C. the development of models of human resource development by using NCNW as a base for initial recruitment and for training an ABE volunteer staff was one of the emerging potentials as Phase II of Operation COPE came to a close. Here, reference must be made to the complementary features of Stanton Dwellings and "Bethune House" as the latter operated in its two sites.

Bethune House was the prime center for

-- creation of a model of human resource development by using NCNW as a base for initial recruitment and for training an ABE volunteer staff. As pointed out in the Final Report, recruitment of prime participants for activity at Bethune House was developed in relation to the residents of the House's surrounding neighborhood. No valid comparisons may be drawn regarding the recruitment techniques and results in the two sites because of the significant variables with respect to operating time, stability of locations and related factors. However, such recruitment has been adjudged as essential to the purpose of training of a volunteer component. Without the prime participants, this could have been a purely pedagogical experience.

The tapping into NCNW as a base for initial recruitment for this human resource development--the achievements which were possible in a relatively short period of time--again are seen as evidences of the potentials of such an operation--in the District of Columbia and in other places across the country where such an effort may be replicated.

D. development of the Advisory Committee as a model seems to have been successful with respect to the composition of this committee. More time for more work was needed in order to identify, demonstrate, and test the functional roles of this committee with respect to the objectives and intents of Operation COPE.

When the compliance with the commitments of the funded proposal, the specific characteristics of the "target population" and its "overview"--defined as the "provision of learning settings in which students can progress along a broad spectrum, receive counseling and support in making decisions on life problems, participate in formulating curricula, and receive supportive services from volunteers"--are set into the perspective in which all of this must be viewed, the meanings and the promises of Operation COPE, particularly in its Phase II, become clear.

It seems apparent that this project can be judged to be "potentially effective in efforts to strengthen the ongoing State Grant Adult Education program." Its potentials include building on the relationships with the D. C. Adult Education Program, and going further with the demonstrated interest in and readiness for volunteer service in ABE programs which offer more than the traditional learning experiences but are related to other advantages, in this instances "coping skills." They embrace possible uses of parts of the Final Report which may be adapted to other situations, and to anticipated uses of the Handbook.

The "innovative features of national significance" which Operation COPE has presented seem to refer importantly to the involvement of a national

organization of Black women with philosophical and operational ties throughout the country--which is indeed at this point reaching to other parts of the world. This, to the Evaluators, is the high point of the project's significance. Operation COPE has already begun, the sponsoring organization is committed to continue, to disseminate the findings of this demonstration program in the District of Columbia to NCNW units and affiliates across the country in ways that would not have been possible without this first-hand, experiential involvement and which are capable of stimulating and reinforcing interest in, and efforts toward replication. It is the conclusion of the Evaluators that this NCNW stimulation and reinforcement will not be limited to those places in which projects similar to Operation COPE are developed by NCNW units and/or affiliates: it is an important conclusion of this assessment that "COPE" has heightened interest in and understanding of ABE throughout the ranks of NCNW; that it has demonstrated some of its values and possibilities and that the implications of this offer promise which will require many years and much effort for really meaningful assessment.